



14 Mile House



Prepared by Peak and Associates, Inc.
for the City of Citrus Heights
History and Arts Commission

Text has been adapted from the City's
application to designate the 14 Mile House
as a California Point of Historical Interest
5/31/2012

THE AUBURN ROAD

After the discovery of gold in Coloma in January of 1848, gold was found in many other drainage systems north and south in the foothill and Sierra Nevada regions. Thousands rushed to California from the eastern states and from countries around the world seeking their fortunes. Travel began in 1848 along existing trails, with the ever growing population in the gold camps drawing a need for supplies of all types. Quickly, more formal roads grew up along the courses of the trails. The freighting industry quickly developed to haul food, mining equipment, construction materials for shelters, clothing and many other items for sustaining the populace in the camps. As the freighting industry grew and travelers needing overnight accommodations on the roadways leading to the mining region, many inns and lodging places were quickly built to fill the need.

The building is the last of the many early inns built to serve the freight wagons along the Auburn Road. The building dates to 1849, and is likely one of the oldest buildings in Sacramento County, even though it has been moved and remodeled.

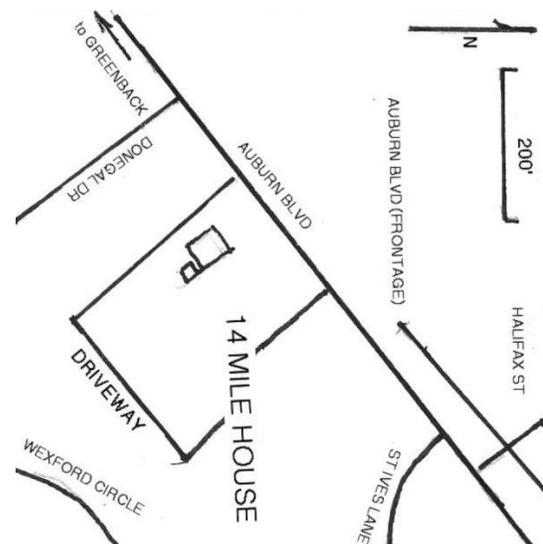
and lodging places were quickly built to fill the need.

Road improvements began to occur, and in 1850, a new shortened road to Illinoistown (now Colfax vicinity) was constructed to help speed travelers to the gold region. The road started in the City of Sacramento, with freight wagons picking up goods and supplies that had been shipped up the Sacramento River. The wagons then headed northeast to Auburn and points beyond. This route is approximately the

course of what is now Auburn Boulevard in Sacramento County. Similarly, gold seekers arriving on ships would travel up the Sacramento River would take off from the docks in the City of Sacramento, heading up J Street, and choosing to travel to the mining regions of the foothills and Sierra Nevada.

The slow progress of the heavy wagons led to the need for overnight lodging along the roadways. A number of inns or way stations developed along the Auburn Road. Between the Oak Grove House at what is now Del Paso Park in Sacramento and the Placer County line, stood the Twelve Mile House, the Fourteen, Fifteen, Sixteen, and Seventeen Mile Houses and the Eighteen Mile or Halfway House (Davis 1998: 4-5).

Research indicates that a Thirteen Mile House was also present on the Auburn Road by 1856 as a new building, and the entire complex was for sale at that time. The two-story building was huge—50 by 80 feet, with a stage stable and a livery stable, a well, an reportedly 320 acres



of land (Sacramento Daily Union February 14, 1856). The building complex was purchased by a Dr. Light for \$800, and unfortunately was burned down soon thereafter, with a likely arson fire the cause (Sacramento Daily Union April 15, 1856). It was never re-built.

Many of the inns were abandoned for use as commercial buildings with the completion of the Central Pacific Railroad in the mid to late 1860s. Goods could be shipped from Sacramento to the railhead, established first at Roseville and later at Auburn. The freight would be picked up at the railhead by the freight teams, thereby bypassing this section of the Auburn Road. Most of the inns became single family residences as the commercial traffic on the roadway died off.

FOURTEEN MILE HOUSE: EARLY HISTORY

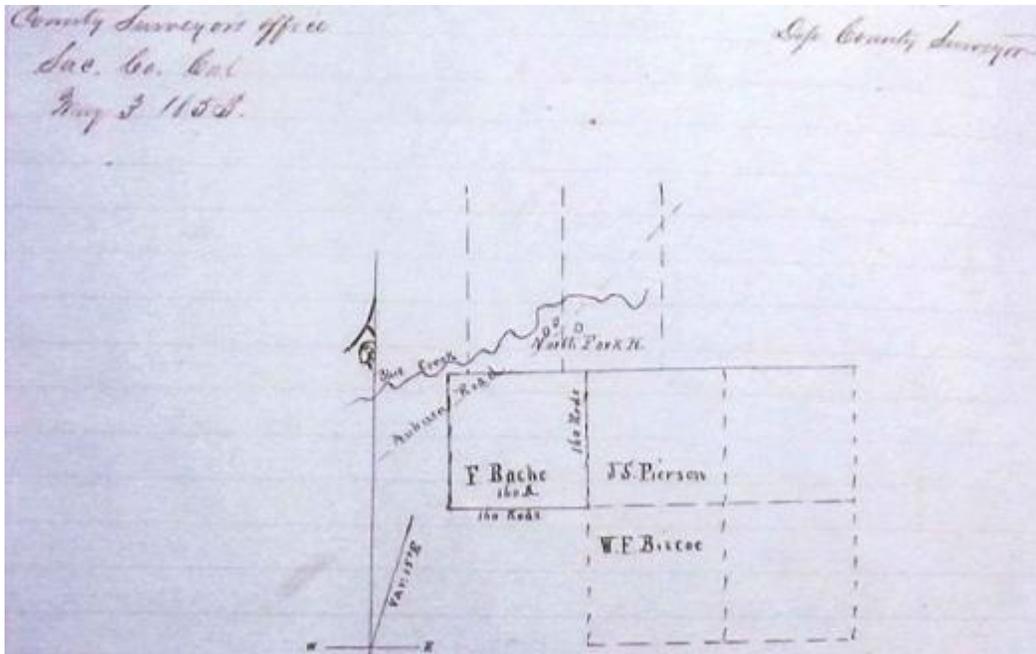
The Fourteen Mile House was constructed as a way station for teamsters, with records not indicating who built the inn. Research indicates that it was built very early in time, with the facility advertised for sale in July 1850 (Sacramento Transcript July 10, 1850). The advertisement states:



Sacramento Transcript July 6, 1850

The spelling of his name was corrected to “Elveena” in the next issue, and the ads continued in the Sacramento Transcript through October 12, 1850. Elveena may have been the builder; he may have been the early owner; or he may have been managing the property for another party. Early records do not give this information. We also must assume he sold the inn in late 1850; no deed can be found for a transfer to a new owner. The lack of recorded deeds for this period is not uncommon.

An 1850 map shows a building on the Auburn Road northeast of Oak Grove House as “Elvina’s,” again confirming the early existence of the building.



CHARLES ELVEENA

Charles Elveena is a fascinating individual, from the records that can be found about his life. He was an artist and inventor, who apparently moved to San Francisco after he left the Fourteen Mile House sometime in about 1850-1851.

Charles Elveena first came to California in the Mexican War as a member of the Third Regiment of the Mounted Missouri Volunteers. He joined the unit on December 17, 1847, was honorably discharged from service at the Jefferson Barracks in Missouri on August 9, 1848. The unit saw service in Mexico. The records include three variants of his name: Elveena, Elvina and Elmina (On-line service records, Missouri State Archives). He must have traveled to California in 1848 or the following year, after hearing of the Coloma gold discovery.

Elveena was also a bit of an adventurer, with a newspaper story describing a trip he took from the Mono area through Hope Valley and back to Placerville. He did not see any Native Americans until he reached Hope Valley, and then rode in among them to ascertain their intentions. He decided that they were a peaceful group who had escaped from other tribes, and did not wish to war against the White populace, even though they were well-armed. He related his adventure to a correspondent in Placerville, who then published a brief account in the Daily Alta California newspaper. This suggests he was somewhat of a celebrity, and his adventures were of enough interest to report (Daily Alta California June 10, 1860). His mobility in the summer of 1860 may explain why he is not listed in the federal census in that year.

Three of his paintings are included in the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Inventories of America Painting and Sculpture Database. One painting of the Round Tent Stage Station is included in the collection of the California Historical Society. Another painting of the Slate Bluff Mining Company dating

to 1860 is included in the collection of the University of California at Berkeley's Art Museum. A third painting of a marine scene was sold in 1963 through a Washington D.C. dealer.

Elveena was also an inventor, with a patent for a photographic process for tinting photographs awarded to him in 1866 (United States Patent Office No. 56,914, August 7, 1866; Sacramento Daily Union September 26, 1866). An 1867 newspaper article describes Elveena of New York City as the inventor of "a simple and cheap instrument for the protection of the horse, mule and ox, from the extreme heat of the sun and a preventative of many diseases resulting from the same." The device was worn on the head of the animal, and was "highly recommended by army officers" (Sacramento Daily Union June 5, 1867). This item does not seem to have been patented.

He returned to New York from San Francisco via the Panama route, leaving in February 1866 on the Golden City (Daily Alta California February 18, 1866). He arrives in New York on March 13, 1866 on the New York, with his occupation listed as "artist" (Passenger lists, Ancestry.com). In 1880, Elveena is living in New York in a household with several other artists, with his birth date given as 1832. It appears he was likely older than this, to have been the proprietor/owner of the Fourteen Mile House in 1850. He died in 1885 in a lodging house in Chicago of heart disease. The article refers to Elveena as a "somewhat famous and well-known artist" (Chicago Inter Ocean Nov. 9. 1885: 8).

THE EARLY 1850s

After Elveena sold the Fourteen Mile House in late 1850, ownership is less certain. In the earliest years, the owners did not file a pre-emption claim for the property, with this option for claiming federal land not formalized until April 1852. The lack of formal filings for changes in ownership is not unusual in the early 1850s.

On July 31, 1852, James Thomas sells an undivided one-half interest in the property for \$2,850 to George Somerindyke, now known as "North Fork House." The property included 480 acres and all stock farming utensils, and provisions (Sacramento County Deeds Book J: 1).

On August 2, 1852, George Weaver sold his one half interest in the property for \$1,500 to James Thomas, with the deed identifying it as a "hotel and tavern," making him a co-owner again of the property (Sacramento County Deeds Book J: 30). A little over a month later, James Thomas sold his half interest in the North Fork House to David W. Pinkham, "with the right of possession and occupation of land adjoining and around said house," totaling 480 acres (Sacramento County Deeds Book J:31). Pinkham is listed in the 1852 in the California Census in Sacramento County as a 31 year old, born in Maine (California Census 1852).

George Somerindyke was the owner of record for tax purposes in 1853. North Fork House was valued at \$3,000 in improvements, with \$450 in personal property, and he paid a total of \$68.47 in state and county taxes (Sacramento County Tax Assessment Roll 1853).

In 1853, pre-emption claims are filed for two 160 parcels of land near North Fork House. Frank Bache claimed a piece of land south and west of North Fork House, with Auburn Road clipping the northwest

corner of the tract (Sacramento County Pre-Emptions Book B: 500; see page 9 of form). North Fork House is indicated in a sketch map as three buildings. To the east of Bache's claim, Walter Biscoe filed for a 160 acre tract of land, southeast of North Fork House. Again, a sketch map accompanies the claim, and clearly shows the North Fork House along the roadway (Sacramento County Pre-Emptions Book B: 504).

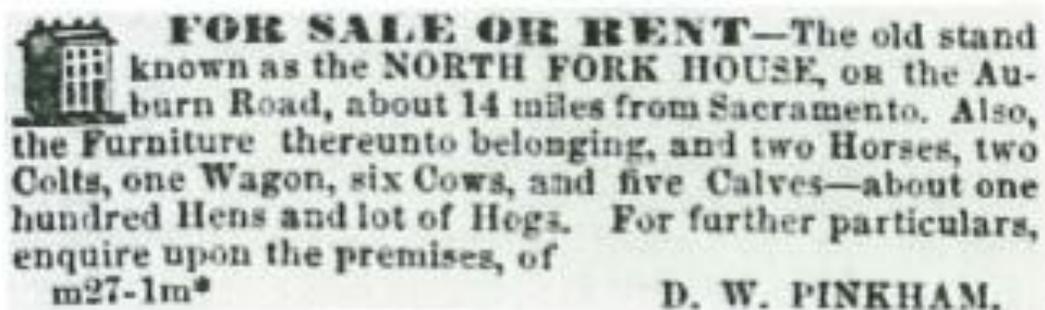
In June 1854, the property is the subject of a Sheriff's sale relating to a judgment that George W. Somerindyke won against Alpheus Robinson. The 160 acre property and building were to be sold at auction at the Courthouse in Sacramento on July 24, 1854 (Sacramento Daily Union, July 4, 1854).

George Somerindyke sold his interest in North Fork House to his partner, David W. Pinkham on December 30, 1854 (Sacramento County Deeds Book O:291). There may have been some deal before this date, since Pinkham is assessed for the property in the 1854 Sacramento County Tax Roll. Pinkham has a personal estate of \$800, and the improvements are valued at \$1,500.

In 1854, even before Somerindyke sells his interest to Pinkham, Pinkham had the land around the North Fork House surveyed, and filed a pre-emption claim on a 160 acre tract north of Bache's claim that would have included the buildings of North Fork House. This was reportedly adjacent to George Somerindyke's claim (Sacramento County Pre-Emptions Book C: 40). George Somerindyke's land may have been surveyed, but the pre-emption claim was never filed with the County.

Somerindyke is later living in San Francisco in 1860 with a wife and son, working in a general agency (Federal Census 1860). He is there at least through 1865, being assessed federal income tax in that year in San Francisco (IRS Tax Assessment List, July-Dec. 1865). His family later moves to Walla Walla, Washington and Somerindyke works as a bag manufacturer (Federal Census 1880).

The next sale of the property did not yield a long-term owner, continuing the pattern of ownership. There was an advertisement appearing in the Sacramento Daily Union in the following year:



(Sacramento Daily Union March 29, 1855, see page 9)

Pinkham is the apparent occupant in August 28, 1855, as a legal case is filed against him by W. C. Gardner. Pinkham's known residence is reported to be in the Center Township, 14 miles from Sacramento.

This may have been the advertisement that brought Joseph Gray into the area. Since he worked as a teamster on the Auburn Road, he was likely familiar with the place, and decided to get into the hotel management business.



View of the 14 Mile House tank house

NORTH FORK HOUSE

Popular local tradition and the Historical Resources Survey for the City of Citrus Heights give the builder and early owner of the Fourteen Mile House as Joseph Gray, who reportedly constructed the inn in 1851. This is clearly not the case, with Gray, a native of England, living in Placer County and working as a teamster in 1852 (California Census 1852).

He was apparently living in North Fork House by late 1855 or early 1856, with him being assessed for taxes in 1856 for the property. The deed showing his purchase could not be found in County records, but he is clearly the legal owner by 1856. He had personal property valued at \$340, and improvements totalling \$1,500 (Sacramento County Tax Assessment Roll 1856). An 1858 article lists the birth of a daughter to Gray and his wife at North Fork House, the name consistently used while under his ownership (*Sacramento Daily Union*, August 2, 1858).

CONSTRUCTION ELEMENTS

This two-story building has shingle siding and a side-facing gable roof with overhanging eaves, knee braces, and exposed rafter tails. On the second story of the symmetrical front elevation are two oblong aluminum sliding windows. Beneath them is a shed roof of a full-width porch with plain posts and a slat railing. The wide front door has a row of small panes near the top. On each side is an eight-over-one window.

The north side elevation has two windows beneath the gable. On the first story are a sliding glass door on the right and a gabled addition on the left. The south side elevation has an external clinker brick chimney that rises through the eave. To its right, on the second story, is a door that opens onto a balcony that is approached by a rear-facing stairway. To the right of the door is a six-over-six window.

On the first floor is a pair of windows with small panes. In the rear there is a shed-roofed extension with a picture window containing the oblong panes. The overall appearance of the building reflects the 1919 remodeling of the building. The aluminum sliders, gabled addition, sliding door, external side stair, and treatment of the rear elevation represent changes made in the past fifty years.

A tank house sits just behind the house at the southeastern corner, separated by about three feet with an extension of the roof of the residence running to the side of the tank house, forming a covered walkway between the two. The tank house is two stories tall but the roof is much lower than the residence. The tank house is of the straight box variety featuring a square footprint, vertical walls and a pyramidal roof (Pitman 1992:16-17). In this case the siding is vertical board and batten. The roof has exposed rafter ends and the roofing has been replaced quite recently with composite shingles.

In the 1858 Sacramento County Tax Assessment Roll, J. Gray is shown as the owner of North Fork House, on 320 acres on the Auburn Road. His improvements were valued at \$1,500, and his personal estate at \$840. No land value is shown, perhaps because his predecessors had not filed pre-emption or other claims to the land.

In the 1860 census, Gray and his wife, both natives of England, have a 2 year old daughter (Federal census 1860). Gray is listed as a hotel keeper, with real estate (the land and North Fork House) valued at \$3000, and his personal estate at \$1,600. His household also includes two farm laborers.

The federal agricultural schedule for 1860 indicates that Gray had 100 acres of improved land, and 220 acres of unimproved land. He had \$150 in farm implements; livestock valued at \$850 including 4 horses, 6 head of dairy cattle, 28 head of beef cattle, 3 sheep, and 6 swine; and 400 bushels of wheat (Federal Agricultural Schedule 1860).

In 1863, Joseph Gray reportedly built the first cabin in what became the Town of Truckee. This building is still extant in the Town. Gray ran a hotel in Truckee and reportedly became involved in the first sawmill operation in the area (Lord, ed. 1981). In 1870, Gray is shown as a hotel keeper in 1870 in Truckee, living with his wife and four children (Federal Census 1870).

It is likely that Gray switched his interest to Truckee in anticipation of expanding business. Most of the freighting business would have been gone by 1863 since the Central Pacific line had been completed well up the hill, past Auburn. It would be far cheaper to ship goods from Sacramento directly to Auburn or the railhead, and put them on a wagon there to ship to other locations. The Auburn Road would be abandoned for most freighting, and the inns converted to private residences.

Gray moved to Sacramento in 1883 after selling off his Truckee milling interests. He died in August 1897, and is buried in the Sacramento City Cemetery (Sacramento Evening Bee, August 6, 1897)

LAUPPES

Joseph Gray sold the Fourteen Mile House and property totaling 320 acres to Rudolph Lauppe, on December 7, 1869 for \$4,000 (Sacramento County Deeds Book 53:72). Gray, for all of his accomplishments, is apparently not literate, with a mark instead of a signature on the sale deed. It is also of interest that no name for the building is given in the document, suggesting that it had been abandoned as an inn some years past.

Rudolph Lauppe, a native of Switzerland who came to California in 1859, lived in the region before purchasing the inn (Thompson and West 1880: 253). Lauppe and his family appear in the 1870 census in the North Fork House, with his wife and three children. His name is spelled "Laupie", likely representing the correct pronunciation of the name. Three farm laborers also lived in the house. His real estate value was listed as \$4,000, with his personal estate valued at \$500 (Federal census 1870).

According to the 1870 federal agricultural schedule, Lauppe placed the value of the farm at \$2,000, with \$450 in farm machinery, 2 horses, 2 other head of cattle, and produced hay and barley.

In the 1880 federal agricultural schedule, Lauppe's property was valued at \$5,000. He had \$400 in farming implements and \$400 in livestock, including milk cows, other cattle, and swine. He had paid \$300 for 25 weeks of farm work. Other farm products included 300 pounds of butter, 25 acres of barley, 30 acres of wheat, and 14 cords of wood.

Lauppe owned a tract of 320 acres including the subject property. He farmed and raised stock on the land, with improvements valued at about \$5,000 in 1880 (Thompson and West 1880: 253). By 1885, he had sold 100 acres of his holdings, and the parcel was reduced to 220 acres (Official Map of Sacramento County 1885). A later biography reported that the farm was primarily devoted to grain, with four acres in orchard (Davis 1890: 607).

The Edward and Mary Lauppe family sold the Fourteen Mile House and the 220 acre tract of land to Adolph and Catherine Van Maren in 1919 (Sacramento County Deeds 514: 52).

THE VAN MAREN FAMILY

Peter Van Maren, a native of Holland, took up a pre-emption claim of 160 acres in Center Township in

Four generations of the Van Maren family have lived in the building for the past 90 years.

1856. Townships were the political and geographical divisions of counties in California; the Center Township extended southward from the Placer County line to the American River in the center section of the county, and included the area from Arcade to Citrus Heights and Antelope.

Peter Van Maren married Constantina Hurtzig, a native of Prussia, in the late 1850s. Constantina had worked for her sister at the Twelve Mile House after her sister bought the inn in 1856, working long hours for low wages. After their marriage, the Van Maren's sued Constantina's sister and her husband for back wages in a precedent setting case that was heard by the California Supreme Court in 1865 (Davis 1998: 5).

When the senior Peter Van Maren died in 1878, he had accumulated a tract of over 1,000 acres (Davis 1998: 7). In 1880, the County history indicated that the family's ranch was managed by son Peter, with the ranch totaling 787 acres of land valued at \$23,000 (Thompson and West 1880: 252-253).

One of the other children of Peter and Constantina Van Maren was Adolph (1864-1939), who inherited a portion of his father's lands to farm. According to Davis, "Like his father before him, Adolph Van Maren still managed to find time to play an active role in his community" (1998: 20). Adolph Van Maren served as clerk of the San Juan High School, served as trustee on the Sylvan School Board, was a member of the Sylvan Cemetery District, served on the board of the local telephone exchange, and was on a 1908 roads panel appointed by the County Board of Supervisors. Adolph's son was Guy Van Maren (Davis 1998: 7).

GUY VAN MAREN

Guy Van Maren was born February 2, 1896. He married Iva Mae Whitsell, born in 1900 in Illinois in 1921. In 1919, Adolph Van Maren had purchased the Fourteen Mile House from Rudolph Lauppe, Sr. The house was moved back on the lot 40 feet, and substantially re-modeled. The house was given to Guy Van Maren by his father as a wedding present, although the 1923 map shows the land as still owned by Adolph and Catherine Van Maren (Official Map of Sacramento County 1923).

Guy Van Maren continued to farm his land, shown on the 1923 Sacramento County map as totaling 216 acres. Guy ran his farm in conjunction with other family members. They grew wheat and other grain, as well as almonds. Behind the house was a vineyard with primarily muscatel grapes. At one point, a portion of their holdings was used for a dairy operation by Guy's son, Jim Van Maren.

Guy Van Maren followed in his father's footsteps as a community activist. In 1926, he was important in promoting a bond to construct a new Sylvan Grammar School, completed in 1927.

The one-room Sylvan School that was replaced was purchased by Adolph Van Maren for \$50, and moved on logs pulled by a tractor down Sylvan Road to a parcel donated by Adolph. The building became the Community Clubhouse, and is still held under the title of "Adolph and Catherine Van Maren Family Trust."

In 1927, Guy was vice president of the County Farm Bureau. He also served in a number of community groups, including the Roseville Post of the American Legion, the Sacramento Elks Lodge, Citrus Heights Fire District Board of Directors, Annual Road Work Day and president of the Community Club. He continued to serve as a trustee of the Sylvan School.

Guy was a member of the Board of Directors of the Fair Oaks Bank, while his father served as vice president. The bank made agricultural loans to many of the farmers in the region. In 1930, Guy became Assistant Cashier of the Bank, serving in that capacity until the bank's failure related to the Depression in about 1933. Guy was named president and state director of the County Farm Bureau, but his bank duties did not allow him to accept the honor.

In 1939, Guy became County Rural Rehabilitation Superior with the Farm Security Administration. He assisted many soldiers discharged from the armed forces to return to private life with farm loans. He continued with this agency until his retirement.

In the 1950s, the soil had become depleted, and was no longer productive. Guy began to sell off portions of his ranch for development, investing the proceeds for his retirement. Guy Van Maren continued to live in the home until he passed away in 1980, with his widow surviving until 1985. Other family members, such as Jim Van Maren's son, have lived in the house since this time.

Jim Van Maren still lives on a portion of the family ranch in a house he had constructed in the mid-1950s (personal communication).

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

The building was apparently in place by about 1849, going up for sale the first time in 1850. The building served as an inn for the freighting wagons that hauled goods from Sacramento to the mining communities along the Auburn Road. Eventually, the completion of the Central Pacific Railroad to Roseville and points beyond led merchants to have their goods shipped by train to the railhead, and hauled from those points out to the gold mining communities in the Sierra foothills.

After the acquisition by the Lauppe family in 1860, the building was used as a single family residence. No photographs of the early building have been found, but it is clear the building has been moved and altered to appear more contemporary in 1919-1920. In 1919, the property was acquired by the Van Maren family. The family moved the house back on the property about 50 feet, and extensively remodeled the place, modernizing the look at adding some Craftsman elements.



Other physical changes have occurred over the years, and the setting was altered in 2002 with the construction of the adjacent townhouse complex. There is no integrity of appearance, materials, design, or workmanship. In 1992, the place was recorded and an evaluation made of the site for the National Register of Historic Places by Peak and Associates/ECORP. The building was found to be not eligible for the NRHP in 2002, and similarly, we do not believe the building maintains sufficient integrity to be considered eligible for the California Register. As a result, the development of a townhouse complex was approved surrounding the old residence with a new fence installed circling the building.

The building is still of merit and a local landmark. It is one of the only remaining inns on the Auburn Road (now Auburn Boulevard in Sacramento County). It retains roughly the same location although it was rolled back on the lot to move it further from the roadway, perhaps related to the widening of the road. Although it was completely remodeled and moved, it still lies in proximity to its original location along the Auburn Road.

The interior core of the building is the 1849 inn building. Although it is not physically evident, it is likely the oldest building in the County of Sacramento, exclusive of the City of Sacramento.

As such, the building allows an interpretation of several aspects of early California history: transportation and the development of the freighting system along the roadways that led to the gold mining region of northern California. The later agricultural history of the community can be interpreted through the association with the Van Marens, early pioneers and long-term community leaders in what was to become Citrus Heights.

In May 2012, the California Office of Historical Preservation awarded Point of Historical Interest Designation to the Fourteen Mile House. California Points of Historical interest are sites, buildings, features or events that are of local significance and have anthropological, cultural, military, political, architectural, economic, scientific or technical, religious, experimental or other value. The Fourteen Mile House designation has been listed in the California Register. Please visit www.citrusheights.net for self guided tour information for the Fourteen Mile House.

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